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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
27 March 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: "Interview" with Fidel Castro Published in Le Monde

1. Around midnight last night Fidel Castro issued a "categorical refutation" of the "alleged interview" between him and a French newsmen, Claude Julien, appears in the Paris newspaper Le Monde. Castro admitted that Julien was among a group of newsmen with whom he had been talking during one of his informal visits to an Havana newspaper office in January. He denied, however, that he had given any exclusive interview to any Le Monde newsmen. He specifically denied that he had expressed himself "in an unfriendly way at any time about Premier Nikita Khrushchev." He implied that the "alleged interview" was concocted by reactionary, pro-imperialist individuals interested in harming "the indestructible friendship that exists and always will exist between Cuba and the Soviet Union." Castro expressed doubt, however, that Julien, "whom we consider a friend of Cuba," could be guilty "of the statements attributed to him by the UPI." He concluded by reaffirming the "profound respect and friendship" which all Cuban revolutionaries have for the Soviet Union, the Soviet Communist party, and Premier Khrushchev.

2. Within a few hours of Castro's "refutation," Moscow TASS in its English language program to Europe was repeating Castro's statements.

3. The content of the Le Monde interview—as known thus far from press accounts—shows every evidence of authenticity, though probably Castro did not expect it

to be published. Rather than a formal interview, however, it may have been derived by Julien during one of Castro's typical informal talking sessions with people whom he trusts and with whom he is wont to unburden himself.

2. The statements attributed to Castro are consistent with information from other sources on Castro's angry reaction to the Soviet missile withdrawal.

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It was also implied in Che Guevara's interview with a correspondent of the London Daily Worker last November. In that interview, Guevara stated that the missile withdrawal may have avoided war, but it did not bring peace. The same reference is attributed to Castro in the Julien interview. There is no reason to doubt it.

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3. What is new in the Julien interview is the statement attributed to Castro that the strategic missiles were sent to Cuba on Soviet initiative. Castro stated that he accepted the Soviet decision to send the missiles on the strength of assurances that this would strengthen "the world socialist camp." This is in direct contrast to Khrushchev's public statement to the effect that the Cubans had asked for the missiles.

4. Assuming the correctness of the reports we now have of the interview we do not feel Castro's statements or his behavior are either surprising or out of keeping with his character.